



## **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of October 23, 2008**

**2:00 p.m., Greensboro, NC**

**Plaza Level Conference Room**

**Melvin Municipal Office Building**

### **TAC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Robbie Perkins	<i>TAC Chair</i>	Mike Winstead	<i>Guilford County Commissioners</i>
Doug Galyon	<i>NCDOT BOT</i>		
T. Dianne Bellamy-Small	<i>Greensboro City Council</i>		

### **ATTENDANCE**

Tyler Meyer	<i>GDOT / TCC Chair</i>	Mike Mills	<i>NCDOT</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	George Linney	<i>GTA</i>
Peggy Holland	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Taft Wireback	<i>News &amp; Record</i>
Lydia McIntyre	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Brenda Gladson	<i>King's Mill resident</i>
Adam Fischer	<i>GDOT Acting Director</i>	Steve Gladson	<i>King's Mill resident</i>
Kelly Larkins	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Matt Talbot	<i>GDOT/MPO</i>
Catherine Campbell	<i>NC Railroad</i>		
Jim Kessler	<i>HNTB</i>		
John Spencer	<i>NC Railroad</i>		

**Robbie Perkins called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.**

### **Action Items**

#### **1. Approve Minutes of September 23, 2008**

Robbie Perkins moved for approval of the minutes. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 23, 2008 meeting as amended.

#### **2. Reports, Concerns, and Discussion from MPO Area Towns**

None

**Planning for the transportation future**

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LEAD PLANNING AGENCY: CITY OF GREENSBORO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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### 3. Citizen Comments

Brenda Gladson a resident of Kings Mill stated that they still have not gotten results from the home inspections in the Kings Mill area done back in February. She also said they keep hearing about the contractors and they were getting something done. She had talked to Mike Mills about additional home inspections. Noted trusses in the ceiling have now busted in the house; a dozen trusses have split or cracked.

Robbie Perkins inquired how many houses were affected.

Gladson noted there were 7 houses. Our house is closest at 14 ½ ft. from the road. Expressed having problems getting results on resolving the issue.

Perkins asked Mike Mills to respond to Gladson's comments and an update on the schedule for the resigning of I-40.

Mills stated NCDOT ROW department are trying to get a licensed contractor to go out and do inspections to get a cost estimate for the repairs. With regards to Marilyn Baird at the last meeting, she and others are getting their own private inspectors. NCDOT will look at their report.

NCDOT is waiting until they get the report from their consultant regarding structural damage to house. Structure Engineer inspected Gladson's home. The consultant said would take a few weeks to complete the reports. NCDOT is still waiting on the report. If there is structural damage will need to reevaluate plans.

Perkins inquired how the issue is being dealt with in regards to having a group of folks not all with the same plans.

Mills advised in this particular area there were 14 houses identify as being in close proximity to the project. 14 vibration monitors were step up at the homes. A pre-inspection and post-inspection was done at the homes. NCDOT Geotechnical Unit stated any house beyond 30 meters or a 100 feet, there is no doubt that it is not a result of the project. It could not be determined if the damage to the 7 houses within 100 feet of the toe of the slope of the project were cause by the project. NCDOT Legal staff determined since unable to determine would pay for damages.

Perkins noted these people have been dealing with this for a long time, and there is an overall concern about the timeliness. Perkins noted would have monthly updates from NCDOT concerning this matter. Perkins asked Ms. Gladson if there was anything else they could help them with.

Gladson inquired were the meters were placed. Gladson refuted that the meters were placed in a good position for accurate readings and noted that there had been some inconsistent meter handling. Three different inspections to her house in 2005, a post inspection was done in February of 2008. Inquired of Mills how can determine the damages are not related to the project.

Mills acknowledged that he is not an expert on vibration, and that it is based on Trigon's results.

Brenda Gladson noted that they said there is not enough data. Mills noted there was not enough evidence to say that the damage was done by the road project or done by someone mowing the yard or someone walking by the monitor. Consultant could not say with 100% certainty that the project did not cause damage to houses within 100 feet.

Perkins inquired about the status of whether the report was received.

Brenda Gladson acknowledged that she did receive a two page report back in February, which she thought was not very detailed. There is another report that no one has seen.

Mills noted the few items listed in the report are the only thing different between the pre and post inspection that were damages caused by the project according to the consultant.

Brenda Gladson mentioned she only speaks for herself and not for the other home owners; she now has other documentation that proves that the damage began in 2005.

Perkins noted what is important to the MPO is no one has got a satisfactory resolution to these issues and that we need to get a resolution.

Mills noted the next step is getting the report back from consultant. Gladson inquired what you will do when the report comes back. Mills noted will make repairs based on report.

Brenda Gladson inquired what will become of the ongoing structural damage. About a month ago it was documented that the house is consistently being shook.

Perkins noted will have action by the next MPO meeting and we want to see this problem fixed.

Bellamy-Small inquired during the design phase was a set back from the project considered. Mills noted that specific criteria were not determined.

Adam Fischer inquired if NCDOT had purchased this home previously. Mills responded yes and the Gladson responded that when they purchased the house that they thought the highway was a 4-lane highway. Galyon responded the public hearing map clearly showed an 8-lane highway.

Perkins asked Mills to update the MPO on the resigning of I-40.

Mills noted NCDOT is reviewing signage plan. Plan to get resigned as soon as possible.

#### **4. Approve National Highway System Changes**

Lydia McIntyre advised last month also approved functional class changes for I-73 Connector and Bryan Boulevard. Noted the addition of I-73 Connector to functional class allows it to be eligible for federal funding. The request today from NCDOT is to add I-73 Connector as a NHS facility from NC 68 to Bryan Boulevard. A portion of Bryan Boulevard would also be designated as a NHS facility from the I-73 Connector to the Western Urban Loop. The approval would allow the roadways to be eligible for NHS funds.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small moved for approval. Mike Winstead seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommendation.

#### **5. Approve Priority Needs for 2011-2017 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program**

Meyer advised that development started in August and continued through September. The MPO started looking at future needs and started looking closely at the status of current projects. As well there was also an examination of future candidate projects for the draft MTIP. Today have a draft list for the TAC's consideration. The start of the MTIP process lays out the discussion for NCDOT and local officials to identify priority projects. This is particularly for projects that can be achieved within the constraints of funding. Priorities include multi-modal projects with public transportation, highways, pedestrian and bicycle components. Meyer further noted that there are different funding sources and partnership opportunities with the City.

Finishing the Urban Loop is at the top of the list. Funding is needed to complete the western part of the Urban Loop. The Lawndale to US 29 section is under design now. There is a three year threshold where progress on the project must be made.

Critical projects include the Eastern Urban Loop connection from US 29 to US 70 which is still scheduled in the TIP. Right of way purchasing for this has begun, with construction starting in 2013.

The next category is Intrastate Projects. Keeping the 68/220 Connector on schedule. I-73 Connector is also priority for the transportation system, but key issue is obtaining funding. The Connector is not eligible for the Highway Trust Fund. NCDOT hopes to be able to do an environmental document and get the design complete. The Connector will be eligible for NHS funds.

Road system improvements include four projects. All projects are on track towards construction and recommend maintaining schedules. MPO staff added US 421 interchange projects to the list. Woody Mill interchange scheduled for right of way next year. Staff also added US 220 intersections at Brassfield, New Garden, and Westridge. Currently included in the 2008 Bond, but may be need participation from State.

Perkins inquired if the need for improvements were resulting from the Urban Loop. Meyer noted that the intersections had been flagged as congestion hot spots prior to the opening of the loop. The committee discussed the possibility of using CMAQ funding.

Next category of projects is the Long Range Roadway Investments. Roadway projects that are not ready for funding, but the environmental documents would be ready within three years. US 29 / Reedy Fork Interchange document should be ready next Fall. US 70 document about to be underway and will take 5 years.

Roadway Planning Priorities include the evaluation Airport Area Roadways. A focus will be on Sandy Ridge Road extension as shown now to tying into I-73/ I-74 Connector. The study will look at various alternatives for the extension of Sandy Ridge including possibly using Market Street and Pleasant Ridge Road.

Meyer advised Pedestrian and Bicycle priorities. Top priorities are Greensboro sidewalks including 18 miles. The sidewalks projects are ready to be constructed next fiscal year. The sidewalk projects include a 1 ½ mile on Randleman Road; 4 ½ miles on West Market; 4 ½ miles on East Wendover Avenue.

Meyer advised the Battleground Rail Trail Phase II can not go forward until Chandler Concrete relocates and Norfolk Southern proceeds with abandonment. Perkins advised that Fischer follow up with Chandler Concrete. Perkins would like to see the project move forward.

Public Transportation projects include the following items. Top priority is the GTA Operation, Maintenance, and Administration Facility. Have funding for design, but need to acquire funding for construction. Also have GTA service priorities which will be discussed in conjunction with CMAQ funding. CMAQ funding can be used for operation support. Also foresee GTA having capital needs. PART requested 4 expansion buses. Perkins noted PART service is really expanding and that they requested CMAQ funds through the MPO. Meyer noted would discuss CMAQ funding later in the meeting, but the use of STPDA funds may be an option to meet PART's request. Perkins noted the MPO should write PART a note letting them know that the item will be on the next meeting's agenda.

Meyer noted the priorities will be given to NCDOT and negotiated for inclusion in the next TIP.

Bellamy-Small inquired about funding for narrow roads. Fischer noted these roads are evaluated and eventually added to the needs list. However, improvements to the roadways are also done through development.

Robbie Perkins moved for approval. Doug Galyon seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommendation.

## **6. NCDOT Policy on CMAQ Funds**

Meyer advised that NCDOT made revisions to the CMAQ process. Noted the revisions were problematic. MPO's requested changes and pleased to see that NCDOT made all the changes recommended. NCDOT did an excellent job incorporating comments. Expect additional funds available next summer or fall.

## **7. Modify 2009-2015 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program – GTA Project**

Meyer stated that \$1.9 million in CMAQ funds were left from the 2005 CMAQ Call. The committees previously agreed on the need to fund GTA top service priorities: expanding the evening service. The existing evening routes are a composite of the daytime route. This proposed expansion would use the existing buses more efficiently by extending their use into the evening. This should generate 60,000 new riders.

These CMAQ funds will cover the first 3 years of operating expenses; after 3 years GTA/City would need to find funding. The air quality analysis completed and approved.

Meyer stated the expanded service will begin July 1<sup>st</sup>

Fischer noted with the expanded ridership, GTA would be eligible for additional federal funds which would help to offset the operational costs after the CMAQ funds expire.

Bellamy-Small moved for approval. Doug Galyon seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommendation.

## **Business / Potential Action Items**

### **1. Proposed 2009 MPO Meeting Schedule**

Lydia McIntyre advised of the proposed 2009 Meeting Schedule. Meeting Calendar notices will be distributed. Requested review of the schedule and advise of any conflicts.

### **2. 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan and Air Quality Update**

McIntyre advised of the status of the 2035 LRTP and Air Quality documents. MPO is preparing to go out for public review. Public Review Period started on Oct. 13 and will run through Nov. 14. The documents are available at various locations including libraries, member towns, and the MPO website. We expect to bring the LRTP to the TAC on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Distributed a copy of the 2035 LRTP Executive Summary.

### **3. Corridor and Commuter Rail Capacity Study**

Tyler Meyer introduced the NCRR staff and Jim Kessler with HNTB.

John Spencer thanked the MPO for the invitation to present information on the Commuter Rail Capacity Study. He noted Dick Hails and NCRR had met a year ago to get ready for the study.

John Spencer from the NC Railroad Property Department introduced Jim Kessler from HNTB. Kessler is principle engineer with a background in rail road engineering and rail transit planning.

The North Carolina Railroad started in the 1850s and partners with Norfolk Southern. It has 317 miles of rails which starts in Charlotte which then proceeds to Salisbury and then to Greensboro. From Greensboro it goes east to Durham, Raleigh, Goldsboro, and to the port in Morehead City. In the late 1800's the company made an agreement with Southern Railway for the rights to operate the system for one-hundred years. This expired in 1999. Currently Norfolk Southern operates the rail line and maintains it, while the North Carolina Railroad owns the property and right of ways. A provision in this new agreement allows for a commuter rail service to operate on the same lines. Considerations with this included the need to maintain 24 hours a day and seven days a week freight service and servicing the customers.

The Research Triangle Institute did a study to evaluate the economic impact of rail service and \$200 million was saved statewide by using rail. Over 24% of North Carolina's economy depends on rail freight service.

Kessler started his presentation by noting HNTB conducted a commuter rail study between Greensboro to Burlington; Burlington to Raleigh; and Raleigh to Goldsboro. Light Rail is an urban service provided all night long and is not able to use the same rail as freight trains because of restrictions due to the build of the vehicles. Commuter rail services can operate at the same time and on the same tracks as freight. There are 18 colleges or universities that are within 2 miles of the rail road.

Discussion with MPOs and chambers of commerce about what the study included and did not include. Found that there is confusion of what commuter rail is. Two passenger rail modes today, including Amtrak and Charlotte's new light rail service. Light rail is urban-oriented type service and provided all day long. Big difference between commuter and light rail is the vehicles used. Light rail vehicles are not able to operate on freight railroad corridor in mixed services. The difference between light rail and commercial freight has to do with the equipment. The passenger vehicles are not Federal Rail Administration (FRA) compliant. Light rail

vehicles do not meet the strength requirement. Therefore light rail can not be on the same track as freight at the same time.

Commuter rail evaluated for this study focus on rush hour and stations are further apart. Important to note that the equipment evaluated would be able to operate on the same track and mix with the freight trains.

For the scenarios, we looked at the services that would be needed. A ridership study to evaluate need was not performed. Assumed typical ridership numbers to justify a commuter rail service. The schedules we set up to run four trains in the morning; one midday round-trip; and four returning in the evening in the opposite direction. A commuter service to be provided from 6:30 AM to 9 AM, one mid-day trip, and from 4 PM - 6:30 PM.

Three scenarios were modeled. The Green Line is a Burlington to West Greensboro service. Service would be a part of larger service, possible to High Point. The study did not go beyond Greensboro. The other line is the Blue Line which leaves Greensboro; runs through Burlington and Durham and terminates in Raleigh. The Yellow Line goes down to Chapel Hill as a connection which will make it a shuttle service meeting trains on the Blue Line. Potentially, someone from Greensboro could catch a train to University Station and take a train down to Chapel Hill in the morning or continue to Raleigh and further east. The third line is the Red Line, beginning in Goldsboro in the morning and traveling west up to Raleigh and West Durham and reverse in the evening.

A model was built to see where the infrastructure would be needed. At these locations a second track would need to get built; 21 miles worth between Greensboro and Burlington with the line being a total of 23 miles. Did not model specific station locations, but modeled generally areas.

Doug Galyon inquired would they need to acquire the right of way.

Kessler stated NCR already owns 200 ft. of right of way. Noted the costs does not include right of way. It comes to \$213 million at 23 miles long with 21 miles of double track in this segment. The cost per mile comes to \$9.3 million. Maximum speed would be 60 mph.

Galyon noted that the cost figure per mile of rail improvements is slightly less than a mile of interstate highway.

The second segment is Burlington going east towards West Durham which is University Station Road, which is where you would go down to Chapel Hill. This segment did not need all double tracks. Some new siding is needed in Mebane and Efland. This part is less expensive at \$56 million dollars or \$2.3 million dollars per mile.

The third segment is the West Durham to Raleigh. Overall the North Carolina Rail Road is single track, but some double tracks do exist. This portion is essentially a single track, except between Raleigh and Cary where a double track does exist. A double track would be needed between Cary and West Durham. The total cost is \$250 million or \$7.1 million per mile.

The line down to Goldsboro would include upgraded railroad and new signal system. The total cost would be \$116 million and \$2.2 per mile.

The connection down to Chapel Hill is only good for 10 mph and upgraded to 40 mph the total cost would be \$23.6 million. Galyon inquired if NCR owned that portion of the rail line. Kessler responded NCR only owns 10% of line and it is primarily owned by Norfolk Southern.

Infrastructure costs total \$657.4 million per mile. Passenger train equipment to support all scenarios is \$283 million, a maintenance facility is \$58 million, and storage yard is \$15 million. The total costs are \$1.02 billion for all scenarios.

Kessler noted introducing passengers into freight lines it is important to consider how development is laid out because impacts safety.

Kessler emphasized the reason for the study. Gas prices, air quality, frustration with congestion and to minimize traffic on our highways.

Kessler advised the next step is determining the type of system that the region needs and the study provides a foundation for determining it. NCRR is preparing 2030 Capital Improvement Plan identifying areas for new tracks and signals and this study can tie into the plan.

Galyon inquired if this study includes the high capacity rail corridor.

Kessler indicated it did not. The improvements looked at only a commuter rail service, although high speed rail would share the same corridor but there is still a question if they are going to be on the same track or build their own track. The rail division of NCDOT is doing capital improvements with this in mind.

Bellamy-Small noted it may be important to discuss this study with PART.

Kessler noted that they had met with 50 other organizations and had met with Bret McKinney a number of times.

#### **4. Transportation Project Updates**

McKinney advised we have received plans for widening West Market Street. McKinney will be attending the field inspection.

McKinney noted NCDOT Rail Division is studying a possible closing at rail crossings in East Greensboro at Pine Street. Proposed closing included as recommendation in the Eastern Guilford County Rail Study. A public workshop is scheduled for November 10<sup>th</sup> at Hairston Middle School. McKinney noted initially proposed to close Lowdermilk and Pine was offer as an alternative. Perkins emphasized the importance of making sure the closure would not result in truck traffic in the neighborhood.

#### **5. MPO Strategic Topics**

At the December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting the LRTP will be presented for adoption

McIntyre also noted that there was going to be an LRTP public meeting next week.

#### **Other Items**

##### **I. Board Member Report**

Doug Galyon noted the Governor has instituted a 2% cost reduction across the State budget. The Secretary has put additional 1%; therefore NCDOT is cutting 3%. Noted gas tax is down 8%. But NCDOT has sufficient funds to carry through next year. Noted has to be significant changes in how NCDOT raises revenues. Tolls will very likely be an option, but will require gap funding. Perkins emphasized the need to have compatible systems across state lines.

On the federal level, Federal Highway Trust Fund ran out of money. Congress infused an emergency \$8.4 billion dollars which only provides funding through June 2009. Also noted bond market is stricter which makes it difficult to sell the bonds.

2. Regional Transportation News

None

3. Wrap-Up

The TAC was adjourned at 3:39 p.m.